

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of capturing information useful in the building of queries, comprising:
receiving an indication of a selected query component;
providing an interface allowing a user to create an annotation to associate with the selected query component; and
storing the annotation with a reference to the selected query component.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the query component comprises one or more query conditions.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein the query component comprises one or more instance values of data.
4. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
providing an interface for building a query by specifying query components; and
wherein receiving an indication of the selected query component comprises receiving a user selection of one or more query components specified, via the interface, for use in a query.
5. The method of claim 1, further comprising providing an interface allowing the user to create a suggested substitution for the selected query component.
6. The method of claim 1, wherein storing the annotation with a reference to the one or more query components comprises:
decomposing the query component into one or more fragments; and
storing the fragments with the annotation.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein storing the annotation with a reference to the one or more query components comprises:
 - substituting a parameter marker for an instance value contained in the query component; and
 - storing the query component with the parameter marker with the annotation.
8. A method of sharing information useful in the building of queries, comprising:
 - monitoring one or more query components specified for use in a query;
 - searching for annotations associated with the one or more query components;
 - and
 - providing an indication of one or more annotations, if found, associated with the one or more query components.
9. The method of claim 8, wherein providing an indication of one or more annotations comprises displaying an annotation icon proximate an annotated query component.
10. The method of claim 9, further comprising, in response to a user selecting an annotation icon, displaying an annotation associated with the annotated query component.
11. The method of claim 9, further comprising displaying a suggested substitution for the annotated query component.
12. The method of claim 11, further comprising:
 - allowing the user to accept the suggested substitution; and
 - in response to the user accepting the suggested substitution, replacing, in the query, the annotated query component with the suggested substitution.

13. The method of claim 8, wherein searching for annotations associated with the one or more query components comprises:

- selecting a query component; and
- searching annotation records for a reference to the selected query component.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein searching annotation records for a reference to the selected query component comprises applying one or more logical rules.

15. The method of claim 13, wherein searching annotation records for a reference to the selected query component comprises searching for references to fields involved in the selected query component.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein searching for references to fields involved in the selected query component comprises searching for references with parameter markers.

17. The method of claim 13, wherein searching annotation records for a reference to the selected query component comprises searching for references to a specific instance value of data.

18. A computer-readable medium containing a program for annotating query components which, when executed by a processor, performs operations comprising:

- receiving an indication of one or more selected query component;
- providing an interface allowing a user to create an annotation to associate with the selected query component; and
- storing the annotation with a reference to the selected query component.

19. The computer-readable medium of claim 18, wherein the operations further comprise providing an interface allowing the user to create a suggested substitution for the selected query component.

20. The computer-readable medium of claim 18, wherein storing the annotation with a reference to the one or more query components comprises:

- substituting a parameter marker for an instance value contained in the query component; and
- storing the query component with the parameter marker with the annotation.

21. The computer-readable medium of claim 18, wherein the operations further comprise:

- monitoring one or more query components specified for use in a query;
- searching for annotations associated with the one or more query components;
- and
- providing an indication of one or more annotations, if found, associated with the one or more query components.

22. A system for sharing information useful in building queries, comprising:

- an annotation database for storing annotations;
- a query building interface allowing users to build queries by specifying query components; and
- an annotation system allowing users to create and display annotations associated with query components used in building queries.

23. The system of claim 22, wherein the annotation system provides an annotation creating interface allowing a user to create an annotation for a query component selected from the query building interface.

24. The system of claim 23, wherein the annotation creating interface is accessible from the query building interface.

25. The system of claim 23, wherein the annotation creating interface allows users to create suggested substitutions for query components associated with annotations.

26. The system of claim 23, wherein the annotation system is configured to:
monitor query components specified, via the query building interface, for use in a query;
search for annotations associated with the one or more query components; and
provide an indication in the query building interface of one or more annotations, if found, associated with the one or more query components.

27. The system of claim 23, wherein:
the indication is an annotation icon; and
the annotation system is further configured to display an annotation associated with a query component, in response to a user selecting the annotation icon.

28. The system of claim 27, wherein the annotation system is further configured to display, to the user, a suggested substitution for the query component associated with the annotation.

29. The system of claim 28, wherein the annotation system is further configured to replace the query component associated with the annotation with the suggested substitution, in response to the user accepting the suggested substitution.